

LAMBERT, Jean-Louis

France 1699–p.1742

The pastel with a somewhat cryptic inscription (which may imply that the artist died in 1742) is apparently a self-portrait. It offers a direct – and immediate – homage to La Tour, uniting features from the lost autoportrait au chapeau de clabaud shown a month earlier at the Salon de 1742 and the well-known autoportrait à la toque d'atelier, thought to date from the same period. Lambert's pastel displays a directness rarely found in portraiture of this era, although entirely suited to the pastel medium. There are echoes of some of the pastels attributed to Méréle (*q.v.*), as well as of Philippe Mercier's self-portrait, and the striking effect of the striped robe de chambre may have emboldened the marquis de Bonnac to pose similarly for Louis Vigée (*q.v.*; Salon de Saint Luc 1752). A curious pastel formerly considered to be a self-portrait by La Tour (Uffizi; *olim* Charles Blanc; *v. Éc. fr.*) could perhaps be by the same artist.

This Lambert is evidently not to be confused with the much younger Michel Lambert (*q.v.*), although Ratouis de Limay describes both under the heading Jean-Baptiste-Ponce Lambert, an early nineteenth century miniaturist who does not seem to have produced pastels. It is speculation as to whether he is the “Lambert le Romain” indicated in the Cottin sale catalogue, a figure included by Constant-Viguié as among some forty of the principal French miniaturists.

Although Guiffrey (1915) lists no Lambert at the Académie de Saint-Luc, “la veuve de Lambert” was *reçu* peintre by that institution in 1752, rue des Marmouzets, chez le commissaire. A valuation of a house in the rue Comtesse-d'Artois belonging to a “Jean-Louis Lambert, fils mineur de défunts Dimanche Lambert et Françoise Igot” was carried out on 26.VII.1718 (Archives nationales (Z¹) 535).

One more possible confusion with a homonym is the appearance of “M. Lambert” in the 1760 account book of Jean-Nicolas Vernezobre (*q.v.*), recorded as owing 7 livres 7 sols with other artists for the purchase of pastels.

Bibliography

Stév.-F. Constant-Viguié, *Manuel de miniature et de gouache*, Paris, 1836, p. 18; Ratouis de Limay 1946

Pastels

J.4448.101 ?AUTO PORTRAIT, en robe d'intérieur de soie rayée, pstl, 61x51, inscr. *verso* “Joannes Ludovicus Lambert etatis suæ 44^o/Delineavit et traxit Domina domina ferret/anno 1742 mensis 7^{bris}” (Paris, 3.III.1937. PC; Galerie Alexis Bordes, cat. 2010, no. 18 repr.). Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1946, p. 183 n.r.; Axelle Corty & Neil Jeffares, “L'autoportrait au pastel de Jean-Louis Lambert”, *Connaissance des arts*, .III.2010, p. 103 repr. φσ



J.4448.103 Femme couchée, pstl, a.1766 (Blondel de Gagny). Lit.: Hébert 1766, I, p. 81

J.4448.105 Onze têtes, parmi lesquelles des sujets célèbres, pstl (Cottin, banquier; Paris, Grignard, Helle & Glomy, 26.IX.1758 & seq., Lot 86, [18 livres; Gaillard]/[?72 livres 16; de Paulney])